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THE

FARM AND THE PRESBYTERY.

HOSPITALITY.

Christmas was approaching, and the wind blew in cold fierce gusts piercing to the very bones. The inhabitants of the farm of Tourbiers had fastened their doors and windows, and sat down before the blazing wood fire to enjoy the comfort of contrasting the roaring fire within to the roaring wind without, when a gentle tap was heard at the door, and a young voice demanded which was the way to Aleneon. Jacques, the farmer, opened the door, and invited the wanderer to come in and warm herself. Shivering with cold she stopped a moment on the threshold, then timidly approached and stood in a corner stretching her long thin fingers towards the blaze, and drawing back a sort of hood that covered her raven tresses, she displayed the countenance of a child of thirteen.

"The night is coming on, my poor little girl," said the farmer, "and you have five long miles ere you reach Aleneon, had you not better stay where you are till morning, unless you have some particular reason for pushing on? What say you, grandmother, had not the child better remain?"

The old dame, to whom this was addressed, had brought up Jacques and his wife Martha, from their infancy; and he knew her kind heart too well to doubt her acquiescence. But nothing could be done without her approbation, who for forty years had been the oracle of the family. The good woman's heart had been touched by the apparent misery of the young girl, and she joined in urging her to remain.

With the most grateful thanks the girl accepted the offered hospitality, and a comfortable supper speedily smoked upon the board. When they had finished, they began asking questions, which soon made them acquainted with the girl's history.

Her father had been a horsedealer, but having sustained great losses, he determined to emigrate to America. He would not, however, carry his daughter with him until he was comfortably settled, he had, therefore, determined to leave her with an aunt at Paris, and they were journeying thither, when he was attacked by fever at Rennes, where, after lingering a few weeks, he died. She did not know the street in which her aunt lived, but she knew her name was Madam Abraham, and had no doubt she would find her! Poor child—how little she knew about a large town!

"What!" said the old grandmother, "you do not know the name of the street in which your aunt lives, and you think you could find her out in such a large city as Paris? The thing is impossible."

"But what can I do, then?" asked the girl.

"Why," replied the dame, "if Jacques and Martha are agreeable, I think you might stay still with us. We are all getting old, and we have no little ones to help us. God seems to have sent you to us, my poor orphan, that we might supply the place of the parent you have lost. What say you, my child? Will you be a daughter to us?"

Jacques extended his hand to his grandmother, which spoke as plain as hand could speak, "You have uttered the sentiments of my heart." Martha's eyes filled with tears of tenderness. The old cousin (for there was an old cousin, though I forgot to introduce her at the beginning of my story) nodded her admiration like a Chinese mandarin, and poor little Susanne, (so was the child called,) struggling with the feelings of wonder and gratitude, sobbed out her thanks as she best could. Jacques shook her heartily by the hand. Martha laughed, while the tears ran down her cheeks, and the old dame smiled with the calm satisfaction of a heart that has made another happy; while the cousin took a pinch of snuff to preserve her equanimity in the midst of the general excitement, and then handed the box to little Susanne. A small chamber was assigned to the stranger, and all retired to rest, satisfied with the occurrences of the day.

It was Christmas-eve, and the inhabitants of the farm were not in bed, although it was ten o'clock. Jacques and Martha were as busy as possible. The servants were dressed in their Sunday's best, and bustling about a long table covered with dainties. The spit was taking a turn with a fat turkey. They were performing a species of waltz before the fire, and the hissing of frying-pans served for music. Bottles of cider, and perhaps something better, glanced merrily as the light shone on them, and this was all because Monsieur le Curé had promised to sup with them after the midnight mass. Monsieur le Curé had won all hearts by his virtues. Nothing was considered too good for him. A marriage-feast could not have been more sumptuously provided for, nor could the servant girls have decked themselves with more brilliant colours had it been their own wedding-day.

Eleven o'clock struck—it was time to go, for the snow lay thick on the ground, and the church was a

good mile distant. None remained at home but the old cousin, who, had she belonged to a church where martyrs were scarce, would have been called a martyr to rheumatism! and the young Susanne, who was suffering from the effects of exposure to cold two days before. Besides, it was necessary to watch the dance of the spit and turkey, that the latter might not overheat himself, or some misunderstanding occur between them that required winding up. The burning zeal of the fritters also needed looking after, so that there were more reasons than one why these two should remain at home.

Two hours had elapsed, when the clamping of wooden shoes on the hard trodden snow, announced the return of the party. They were gay, and yet they were recollected—it was a season of rejoicing, but their joy was mingled with awe and veneration. Escorted by his servant, the good Curé soon made his appearance. He was a venerable old man, who had followed the camp in the wars of la Vendée, to give spiritual assistance to the valiant men who fought for their God and their king.

"Let us begin, my friends," he gaily said, and approached the table; "since my weakness prevents me saying more than two Masses on this blessed night, and I have provided a substitute for the morning, I can partake of your hospitality. But who is this pretty child, whom I have never before seen?"

Susanne's history was soon told, and then the signal was given, and all stood round while the benediction was pronounced by the Curé. Every hand was raised to make the sign of the cross, every lip moved to say, Amen, with one single exception. Susanne's hand hung listlessly by her side, Susanne's lips remained motionless. The Curé perceived it, and was astonished. Jacques sighed but said nothing; the cousin looked wise and took snuff; while the others were too much occupied with the Curé to notice any one else.

The smoking pudding circulated, the roasted turkey was cut up. The Curé was first helped, but he passed his plate until every female was served, before he would eat a morsel.

"You eat nothing, my young friend," said the Curé, addressing Susanne, "you look askant at this fine slice of bacon, as if you were a Jewess."

"I am a Jewess, Monsieur," said the child.

Hardly had the words escaped her lips, when the good folks of the farm started to their feet in horror. "A Jewess! Good God!" cried the old dame. "A Jewess—and have I slept under the same roof with thee! A Jewess—this day when we celebrate the birth of our Divine Redeemer, is my house, my table polluted by the presence of a Jewess! Away with thee, miserable wretch," she continued in tones of indignation and horror, "away with thee, or I will leave this house, contaminated by the presence of a descendant of the crucifiers of my God."

The unfortunate child stood trembling—no one dared to interpose between her and the excited old woman. The others had noticed before that she did not join in their family worship, but they had said nothing for fear of depriving her of the protection of the dame, imputing it to a neglected education, which they hoped to remedy.

The silent tears stole down the child's cheeks as she prepared to go. But where? Alas! she knew not.

The Curé arose with dignity, and made a sign to the child to remain for a few minutes. "I am your guest, my friends," he said, "and I request there may be nothing more said on this subject—but Susanne must not be made an orphan a second time—she shall go to the presbytery, my house shall be her home for a season. You have most charitably received her, I must share in your good action. Go, my child, the house is within a very short distance, knock at the door, Louisa will open to you, you will yet be in time to share her supper, and you will find no food there which you consider impure."

The child departed weeping, and a little constraint succeeded this scene, which the bottles (of which we have already made honourable mention) dissipated speedily.

It was Twelfth-day, and the smoke rose from the kitchen of the presbytery, for the inmates of the farm were coming to dinner. At two o'clock, the guests arrived. The old dame, enveloped in a scarlet mantle, leant on Martha, while Jacques followed, looking rather sheepish, and twirling his hat in his hand, but the good Curé received them so graciously they soon felt quite at their ease.

A place was left vacant near the grandmother, but was soon filled by a young girl clad in white, who seated herself with downcast eyes. The farmer and his wife, with looks full of kindness, would have approached and offered their hands, but a sign from the Curé made them resume their seats.

"Good mother," said he, addressing the old woman, "if the presence of a Jewess moved your Christian heart with indignation, how much more should that heart be moved with joy and consolation at the sight of a young catechumen, who desires to be baptised as soon as she is sufficiently instructed. She owes her happiness to you, for, touched by your holy indignation, on my return that morning from the farm, she threw herself on her knees, and besought me to instruct her in the Christian religion; now she begs of you to be her godmother and to give her a Christian name."

A very old person can feel they have acted wrong, and be willing to avow it. The old dame wept tears of regret as well as of joy. The child rejoiced at having recovered lost friends, but the Cure interrupted farther demonstrations of feeling by calling them to begin dinner.

A few weeks after, the church bells rung for a baptism. Jacques and the grandmother were the sponsors, and they gave Susanne the sweet name of Mary. On the following Easter Sunday, with a heart full of devotion to Mary and her Divine Son, she received the body of her crucified Redeemer, and six years after, she chose for her divine spouse, Him whom her forefathers had put to death, but whom she had been taught to acknowledge as her Lord, her God, her portion for time and eternity. M. L.

ON SOME WHO HAVE LEFT THE CHURCH.

[A few priests in Germany, one in France, and one or two in Ireland, within the last few years, it is said, have fallen from the Church. The fruitless attempts which some of them have made to form new sects, and the bitter dissensions which have followed, are known to many of our readers. Of the uncharitableness and impiety displayed by one of these unhappy men, due notice was taken some time ago by the *English Churchman*, a Protestant paper of very high character; and we feel a pleasure in communicating to our readers the Editor's remarks.]

"Without going so far as to say that 'Rome gets our best men, and we get her worst,' we must own that our experience teaches us that—the relative numbers being the same—the gain is on the side of Rome as regards the *character* of the individual seceders. We do not allude so much to their intellectual acquirements, or their power and influence, as to their known piety previous to their secession, and their orderly, decent, and inoffensive conduct subsequent to that event. That our evidence on the latter point is, necessarily, of a negative character we admit, but we heartily wish that we could adduce even that evidence in favour of those who come from Rome to us. We wish that, having once finally left that communion, they would employ all their energies in seeking to understand and to realize the privileges of their adopted mother, instead of employing them in the abuse and ridicule of their natural parent.

"This latter practice is, just now, so prevalent, and, as we consider, so exceedingly reprehensible, that we cannot trust ourselves to characterise it as it deserves. In alluding to the *principle* involved in such a course, we do not confine our thoughts to those who have passed from the one church to the other, for we regard with but little less abhorrence the conduct of him who having, in mature years, left any one of the ordinary Protestant communities for the church, *immediately* turns round and vilifies with coarse and vulgar violence that community which, however defective, had hitherto preserved him from positive impiety and perfect infidelity—had watched over and cherished him in his infancy—had excited, and it may be, does still excite, the regard and reverence of his parents and kinsfolk, and, in his hours of affliction and sorrow, has even poured some measure of consolation into his wounded spirit. Granted, as it must be, that all this was done in a degree far inferior to that which his newly-adopted communion both promises and realizes, is that a reason for abusing and railing at her who 'hath done what she could' for his soul?

"But is not a convert from a bad to a better system the best qualified person for exposing the errors and defects of the system which he has abandoned? This is a much more doubtful question, we apprehend, than it is generally supposed to be. Even if we answer the question in the affirmative, we must insist upon the necessity of his abstaining from everything which is calculated to irritate and annoy his former friends, without benefiting, in any way, the community to which he has joined himself. To this course he is bound by every motive which should actuate him as a man and as a Christian; and whosoever infringes this rule, and launches forth abusive epithets, opprobrious nick-names, and foul language upon those with whom he has fraternized from his birth, disgraces more deeply the communion he has joined than that which he has recently left. Such an one should recollect, in all humility, that if his former companions were, and still are, in a sinful and degraded state, he has been for many years a partaker in that sin and in that degradation, and he ought rather to look to himself and his own need of cleansing, than to them. Ham had not, as far as it is revealed to us, been a partaker in the unfortunate act of his father, yet the curse of God was pronounced upon him for rudely exposing that infirmity.

"It is from the dread of such conduct as that of which we have been complaining, that we do not look upon converts to our communion with that perfect complacency with which many persons regard them. *They very seldom turn out satisfactorily.* A few are quiet, which is a good sign; but the majority are noisy, and, with a total want of that delicacy and modesty which their situation demands, push themselves forward as candidates for popular applause, their sole stock-in-trade being abuse of their old friends and connexions; and eventually they bring more disgrace than credit upon our Church: thus estranging still farther from her those who, but for *their* evil conduct, might have been quietly led into her fold.

"By way of illustration of that portion of our remarks, which bears upon converts from Rome, we give the following extracts from an address of a recent clerical seceder in Ireland to his late congregation. For the publication of this address, we are sorry to state that we are indebted to a well-meaning priest of our own communion, who has sent it to a provincial paper with the idea that it may do 'some real good' among the Roman Catholics of his neighbourhood. Let us see.

"'My dear Friends,—Your extreme kindness towards me, during my short residence in your parish, imposes on me the *pleasing duty* of addressing to you a few observations on the course I have lately adopted and intend to pursue, in the humble hope that they may be the means of inducing you to reflect seriously on your present dangerous position. I have been, like you, for years the creature of prejudice. There was only this difference between us, that I was for the last ten years a minister of the Roman Catholic religion—you were its subjects. You continue members of that religion, so would I, had not Divine Providence inspired me to 'search the Scriptures,' which I have occasionally done for the last five years, and more frequently during the last year, than any of the previous four years.'

"He thus, at the very outset, confesses that he had for several years neglected an undoubted part of his duty as a Roman Catholic Priest, viz., the diligent reading of the Holy Scriptures.

"'There was one text in particular which attracted my attention, and to which I attribute my present happy position. I shall lay it before you for your serious consideration, beseeching Almighty God that it may produce the same effect upon you.'

"On arriving at this part of the address we became most anxiously curious to learn what that one text could be which of itself had wrenched from the Romish communion a duly ordained priest of some ten years' standing. Was it a text which had been hid in some chapter which is seldom read in the Romish Church, or had it been wilfully mistranslated or omitted altogether, with a view to prevent its infallible effect upon Roman Catholics?

"'It is found in the eighth chapter and thirty-sixth verse of St. Mark, and runs thus—'For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul.'

"How this text bears peculiarly upon the points of difference between the Romish and Anglican branches of the Catholic Church, we are wholly at a loss to perceive. But it is difficult to follow the ratiocination of some minds. We, however, earnestly hope and pray that neither this nor any other part of God's Holy Word may be so grossly abused as to be made to lead to the following fearful, and wickedly presumptuous conclusion—

"'Having devoted much time to the investigation of the truth, I have been led to the conclusion, that *salvation could not be obtained in the Church of Rome.* * * * * I discovered that the Church of *Rome was not the* [a?] *Church of Christ;* and passing events *clearly indicate* that this mighty Babylon, *this hideous monster*, as it is described in the Apocalypse, which has kept the Christian world for centuries in thraldom, is at this moment tottering to its foundation, and soon likely to bury in its ruins that idolatry and superstition it had so strongly inculcated and so earnestly recommended to its poor deluded followers.'

"Even were this conclusion legitimate, and every word of this description of the Church of Rome were true, is it decent, is it in any sense Christian, for an avowed novice in the Bible, a novice in our communion, (if indeed he be in our communion,) to come forward and dogmatize upon a point which the holiest and the most learned amongst us shrink from deciding?

"We have next some rude, irreverent remarks upon the Eucharist, which we must necessarily omit; but we must give one specimen of the imbecile trifling and quibbling of this dogmatist:—

"'Suppose for a moment, that your priests have the power of transubstantiating or changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ—a supposition *quite repugnant to common sense*, and not to be admitted)—are you not still guilty of idolatry? Before the words of consecration are pronounced—yes, some seconds before they are pronounced, is not the change to take place announced, or rather intimated, by the tinkling of a

bell? Do you not then bow down your heads and adore? Yes, you do. This fact, you know, you cannot conceal from me. You then adore some seconds before the words of consecration are pronounced,' &c.

"Again, although it is very painful to quote such language:—

"'Too long have you groaned under the yoke of slavery. It is full time for you to enjoy the liberty of the Gospel of Christ.—'Search the Scriptures.'—Learn instruction from those who are anxious that you should be instructed and enlightened, and *who are capable of communicating instruction to you.* Take the advice of those whose only desire is your present and future happiness, and *who are, by study and experience, qualified to give it you.* * * * * * * Let us all, my dear friends, make the Book of God our chief, our only study; *let us practise those sublime moral precepts which it inculcates; and above all, and before all, let us practise that sublime* CHARITY *that love of one another, which glows in its every page.*'

"We can hardly hope that it is sheer ignorance and blindness which have prompted this individual to discourse of his purity, and his love, and his charity—his abstaining from reviling, and so forth. Having grossly reviled his church, and abused his fellow priests, and having coolly asserted that the soul of every man who dies a Roman Catholic, *must necessarily be eternally condemned,* he talks of his—Charity!

"We would ask any pious, intelligent, and candid churchman these two questions—

"1. Is it in the slightest degree probable that this address will do 'any real good' among the Roman Catholics?

"Is the writer of such an address to be considered a desirable acquisition to our church?

"We may safely anticipate a negative answer to both of these questions, and we feel sure that our readers will, with us, lament, rather than rejoice, over such 'converts.'

ADDRESS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

ON THE DAY OF HER GLORIOUS ASSUMPTION,

For the Conversion of my Children.

ANGELS trooped in bright succession,
Seraphs singing in the sky,
Odours sweet in heaven's possession
Bear "the Mystic Rose" on high.

Eyes of Mary! near whose beaming
Stars of glory dimly shine;
Planetary brightness seeming
Lost in radiance so divine.

Eyes of Mary! looking softer
Than the moon in evening mild;
Turn those rays of liquid lustre
On her supplicating child.

Mother, hear me now beseeching
For my captive children pray;
Compassionate my grief and weeping,
On this joyous festal day.

By the joy of that saluting,
Bright archangel Gabriel's "Hail!"
Hear me for thy aid invoking—
For thy prayers which never fail.

By that heaven-directed meeting,
When saint Elizabeth exclaimed—
"Mother of our Lord!" *Thee* greeting
Thus—thy blessedness proclaimed

By the sword of grief which pierced thee,
While the prophet Simeon spake;
Look benignly now upon me,
On my children pity take.

By delicious joys which fill'd thee,
When God (an infant) on thee smil'd;
Look with clemency upon me,
"Help of Christians!" Virgin mild!

By the poignant grief which seized thee,
When Herod sought thy Jesus' life;
Oh! avert *my* children's danger,
(Unarmed to meet the demon's strife.)

By the joy thy soul delighting,
When eastern sovereigns adored
Thy Jesus—humbly made their offering,
Owning *him their sovereign Lord.*

By the grief your heart assailing,
When, in vain you sought your child;
Oh! assist *my* children wandering
All bewildered and beguiled.

By the grateful joy which blest thee,
When on the temple's hallowed ground,
Midst th' astonished throng which press'd thee,
Jesus—preaching there you found,

By the bitter woe and anguish,
Afflicted Mother! at *His* side
Thou beheld'st thy Jesus languish;
Pity those for whom he died.

By thy desolating sadness
At the clos'd sepulchre's sight,
Mother! let *my* children's darkness
Pass away!—oh! give them light.

By thy blessed Son's appearing
Triumphant over Death and Hell,
Offer prayers—thy Jesus hearing,
Will succour those He loves so well.

By the joys so far surpassing
Thought e'er reach'd or eye hath seen,
Hear me now my grief outpouring,
Virgin Mother! Heavenly Queen!

Saint Mary's M. E. I. W.
For the Assumption, 1845.

SIN.—There are two kinds of sin; one is born of poverty, the other of excess. The sins of poverty and want are servile and timid. When a poor man steals, he hides himself, he trembles when he is discovered: he would not dare to vindicate his crime, too happy if he can evade its consequences, by shrouding himself in darkness and concealment. But the sins of abundance are proud and bold: they defy censure, they are indignant at it, and do not want for flatterers to approve and encourage them.—ST. AUGUSTINE—*Book of the Fathers.*

To watch the economy of birds—to mark the enjoyment of the animal world—to view with an eye of interest and contemplation the fields "with verdure clad," and every opening blossom bursting into beauty and to life, are enjoyments that instruct and delight youth, middle, and old age. They supply us with a source of innocent employment, to which none need be dead but those who wilfully become so by keeping their eyes closed before that book of Nature which is everywhere spread around, that we should read in it those characters of an Almighty hand that lead the mind to wonder at and adore his goodness, and the heart to acknowledge and to feel his power as a Father, who in his "wisdom has created," and preserves them all.

METHINKS men should be ashamed to profess the belief of a life to come, while they cannot behold without indignation, nor mention but with derision, that holiness without which it can never be attained, and which is indeed the seed and principle of the thing itself.

A. M. D. G.

THE ROBIN REDBREAST.

FROM THE GERMAN OF CHRISTOPHER SCHMID, CANON OF AUGSBURGH.

Martin Frank was a brave soldier, who had served for many years, gone through many campaigns, and fought honourably for his country. When he returned home from the wars, his poor parents were lately dead, and had left him nothing but an old tumble-down house with a little orchard. The brave veteran now found himself in a very poor situation, as his wounds rendered all severe labour impossible. He was very sorrowful; and considered earnestly night and day how to earn an honourable livelihood.

One day as he was walking in the neighbouring wood, he remarked that the old stumps and roots of the maple trees that were cut down presented some very beautiful pieces of streaked and variegated wood, but were little esteemed or lay useless in the wood. He immediately tried to make pipe-tops and tobacco boxes out of this wood, and soon brought the manufacture to an unusual perfection: the pipe-tops which were neatly cut out of the prettiest wood, and beautifully polished, were much approved of, and met with a ready sale. Many gentlemen of high rank used these pipe-bowls set in silver instead of Turkish pipes.

This industrious man laboured unweariedly the whole week in his work-shop, or in carrying home wood, and was no better dressed than a common labourer.

But on Sunday he appeared in his green uniform with red facings and with his silver medal of honour on his breast; and went early leaning on his corporal's staff, as he was a little lame of one foot, with measured steps to church, and in the evening for an hour or two at the most to the village inn. He had still something martial in his appearance and countenance, and still wore his mustacheos. He was much esteemed for his uprightness, industry and order; and acquired, by his attention to business and his prudent economy, a very respectable competence.

He was not one of those who, when they earn a good deal immediately expend it all, and think that it will ever continue so. Amongst other things he improved his old wooden house, which a generous friend had caused to be pulled down and rebuilt, and he arranged it so well, that he lived very comfortable and conveniently in it; and that it looked very well with the deep brown of the wood, the new round windows, and the bright lead of the windows, amidst the high pear trees and the blooming apple trees. He married, and brought up his children, a son and daughter excellently, and provided very well for them. "He who is not wanting in industry," said he often, "will never find a necessary income wanting. Even the most insignificant trade can support a man. Do your duty faithfully, and trust in God, and God will do his part, and will not suffer you to want his necessary aid."

When the good Martin had attained a tolerable old age, his wife died, and from that time the gallant old soldier looked after his house himself, without employing the services of any maid. At the same time he took his grandson to live with him, a lively rosy-cheeked boy, who had been christened Martin in honour of his grandfather. The little Martin loved his grandfather with his whole heart and soul, and did every thing to please him, even when he only guessed his wishes from his countenance. His grandfather made use of him as an assistant in his trade, and recounted to him while at work, sometimes merry, sometimes fearful tales of his campaigns, from which he always drew some good moral.

The grandfather often spent whole days in the woods, selecting the roots and the stumps fit for his purpose, and bringing them home: on these occasions he always took his grandson with him. These were the happiest days of the boy's life. He never was so well pleased as when in the woods. His grandfather taught him all the trees of the wood, their qualities and uses. "We can never sufficiently thank our loving God," said they one to another, "that he has caused the great trees to grow for our use. Had he not given us trees, we should have been sadly off. The firs and the pines afford us beams, planks, and laths: our whole house is built of fir; and tables and chairs, chests and bedsteads are made of it.

"The wood of the fir is certainly somewhat soft; but other trees, such as the oak and beech, have very strong hard wood. If our wheel-barrows were not made of such hard wood, they would not last long. Without hard wood we could not even have a durable handle for our tools. It is a beautiful arrangement too, that each kind of wood has a peculiar colour; one is a fine red, or yellowish, or a rich brown, and thus they serve for all sorts of nice household furniture. But the wood of the maple is veined like marble, and its grain is so fine, that you cannot distinguish the fibres of the wood, for which reason we can make it into such fine articles. Certainly men cannot eat the fruit of the wood trees; but nevertheless these trees support many thousand poor men, who earn their livelihood by working in wood.

"We too owe our living to the maple tree. Thus has God disposed all things wisely. We must recognize his wisdom and goodness in all things, and bear a grateful heart towards him." The little Martin was delighted beyond measure with the birds in the wood and their sweet song. "Grandfather," said he, "I would like to catch one and take it home to the house with me!"—"Nay," answered his grandfather, "that must not be."—"Why not?" said the child; "they sing delightfully. In the house we might ever hear them sing."—"You can hear them singing here in the wood," said his grandfather; "it sounds far better. The poor birds whom men so cruelly catch, seldom live long, and they are often rendered miserable by the neglect of men." One fine day, however, towards the close of autumn,

the grandfather and his grandson were seated in a sunny glade of the wood at their humble dinner, which the boy had as usual brought in a basket. A robin redbreast, or, as it is sometimes called, a redneck, came and picked up the crumbs scattered about. The child was delighted with it. "What a wonderful bird," exclaimed he to his grandfather, speaking quite low not to disturb it. "There is nothing I would not give to have such a bird in our room during the winter."—"And so you may," answered his grandfather; "the robin is a very tame bird, and willingly stops with man. It probably prefers to pass the winter under a roof, to spending it in the open air." His grandfather then taught the boy how to take such a bird.

Little Martin spent every day for a week, in the wood, to see if there was not a robin caught. But he ever came home empty, and had almost given up all hopes of getting one. At last, one day he came running home shouting for joy. "Grandfather," he exclaimed, "see, I have got one at last! Oh look at his beautiful little bright black eyes, and what a lovely red his breast is! I am well repaid for all my care and trouble." He allowed the bird to fly in the room, and his delight was yet greater when he perceived that it showed no signs of fear, but picked up the flies about the room, eat the yellow bits of turnips mixed with meal out of the little green earthenware trough, and washed himself in the plate of water. Martin brought a fresh green little fir tree from the wood, and fixed it in one corner of the room. The bird immediately flew to it. "Aha," exclaimed Martin, "he knows when he's well off. How lively he hops from spray to spray. How roguishly he looks out from between the branches, and how well his red breast contrasts with their dark green!" The robin soon became quite acquainted with him, would pick the flies from between his fingers, sat on the edge of his plate, eat with him, and learned to relish potatoes excellently. He often went out of the open window into the garden, hopped off to the hedge singing, but soon came back of his own accord. The bird was the source of a thousand pleasures to Martin—and when he first began to sing, Martin held his breath to listen, with such intense delight, at the lively little twitterer, that he would not have heard a first-rate flute player with more pleasure.

The Patron-day* of his grandfather came round again. The grandfather looked one evening in a calendar and said, "Dear me, how time slips away! Next Tuesday is Saint Martin's day. How different it was a year ago! Then my dear Elizabeth was alive, and we eat together the Martinmas goose which she had fatted for my Patron-day. But now—it will be a sad Martinmas. It makes a sad difference when there is no housewife to look after the household. We cannot even observe the good old custom of eating a goose on St. Martin's; I had forgotten it, and it is now too late. He put on his green uniform in rather low spirits, and went to the Golden Eagle, where on Sunday evenings he usually read the newspaper to the peasants, and related his adventures to them.

The grandfather had scarcely left the house, when the young Adolphus, the son of the Lord of Waldberg, who lived in the castle on the hill, entered the door to order a pair of pipe bowls according to the pattern he carried.

Little Martin was playing with his robin, who had flown on to his finger, and was picking some bruised hemp-seed from his hand. "What will you take for the bird?" said Adolphus. "It is very tame; I will buy it from you."—"I love him too well," answered Martin, as he stroked its feathers with his other hand; "I cannot sell him for any price." But the rich young gentleman begged and begged, and offered him a crown. Then the thought struck Martin that for a crown he might buy a goose, and so afford his grandfather an unexpected pleasure. He therefore gave the bird to the young gentleman, after requesting and begging him most earnestly to treat the good gentle little thing well. "Take good care," said he, "that the cats in the castle do not get near him; and do not cut his wings." Martin now went from house to house to find a goose for sale. One woman had a splendid fat goose to sell; but she said she could not sell it for a crown. Martin said sorrowfully that he had no more than a crown, and told how he had sold his bird to get a goose for his grandfather. This pleased the woman. "Well," said she, "for your love for your grandfather, you shall have the goose at your own price."

Martin thanked her joyfully, and said he would come for the goose the next morning.

The evening before the long expected feast, little Martin came right joyfully with the well-fatted goose under his arm into the room, repeated some couplets wishing every happiness to his grandfather, which at Martin's earnest request, the schoolmaster had composed in pretty verse, but during the recitation of which, the goose, to his great annoyance, several times broke in with its gaggling. At the end of the speech, Martin, with a low bow, offered his grandfather the goose as a gift for his Patron-day.

The old man, who was highly honourable, would not at first be pleased. He had some suspicions and spoke to the boy right sharply. "Where did you get the goose, or the money for it?" exclaimed he with great earnestness, rising up from his arm-chair, and raising his hazel stick with a threatening gesture. He could wield the corporal's stick right well, though he had no need to make a practice of it with his good-hearted obedient nephew. Martin was silent. "Where did you get it?" said the old man in yet deeper and more earnest tones; "answer me." Martin recounted the sale of his dear robin. His grandfather was much touched, and wiped away a tear from his moustacheos, which had fallen during the relation. "Bravo!" he exclaimed, "you have

* In catholic countries, persons keep a feast similar to what is called in this country, "Birth-day," or a feast of the saint after whom they are named.—*Translator.*

done well. I am delighted to see you love your grandfather so well. Martinmas will yet be a joyful feast for me—a real feast for my heart. Go now and put the goose for the present into the empty crib."

As the lad turned away, the grandfather said to himself, "That lad has a heart that is worth more than gold. What he has done is a true Martin's act. Saint Martin gave half his cloak to the beggar; but this lad gave away his whole delight to do a pleasure to his grandfather. My holy Patron will not take it amiss, that I should say that this boy has done almost more than holy Martin, who, if I remember right, was a soldier too.

The grandfather, who in campaigns had often cooked, and still practised this art, prepared himself this unusual dish, and during the dinner gave the best to his grandson. Whilst they were sitting at table, there came quite unexpectedly a servant from the castle with a bottle of wine, and said that his master and mistress had learned from the young Baron Adolphus, how the little Martin had sold his pretty robin to buy a goose for *his grandfather's Patron-day;* and that they sent master corporal a glass of wine to drink to it, and wished him the joys of the feast. The old man felt much honoured by this condescension, and little Martin too rejoiced that his robin had procured his grandfather not only a Martinmas goose, but also a good bottle of wine with it.

Poor Martin, however, missed his little pet sadly; he could hardly bear to look at the fir-tree which stood solitary and deserted in the corner of the room. One evening the grandfather and his grandson were sitting round the fire; as the weather was cloudy, it was dark earlier than usual, and they had therefore lit the fire. It was a bitter November evening, it snowed and rained alternately, the storm sighed and roared as though it would tear down their little house. On a sudden little Martin exclaimed, "There's a bird at the window, he is pecking against the glass as if he wanted to be let in." He opened the window—the bird flew in—and who can describe the joy of Martin when he recognized his beloved robin. He had tied a thread of red silk round its foot, by which he made sure of recognizing it. "Oh my dear little thing!" exclaimed he, "so you have come back? You have not forgotten your Martin. How did you find out your home again? Do you love this humble roof better than the grand castle? Well, well, we have a warm room for winter, and a warm soup and enough to eat, and, what is better than all, a light heart. And who need wish for more?"

He stretched out his hand, and the bird flew to him. "Is it not true," said he, "that you would like to stay here? But you dont understand it. I may not keep you here; that were but to steal you. I must—must take you back again. Ah," sighed he, and he pressed the bird to his wet cheek, "you dont know how hard it is for me to part with you; but it must be."

"Bravo, boy!" said his grandfather, "that is right; that is your duty. Take the bird back at once; it will be harder for you if you put it off. What is not ours shall never stay a night under our roof. And make haste to be back before night sets in."

Martin took his new fur cap, which his grandfather had made him a present of on his Patron-day, and trudged through the rain and snow up to the castle. The little Adolphus was delighted when he saw the bird again in the boy's hand. But his mother, who was sitting on a sofa at work before a table on which stood two bright wax candles, was much pleased with the honesty of the lad. "You have done very well, child, in bringing back the bird. You might easily have kept it without our knowing anything about it. Nay, even if I had seen it in your house, I should have thought it was another robin. But I should never have thought that so little a bird would have had such affection for men, and that he would have been able to find out again the house where he had been kindly received and treated. Since so little a creature is not destitute of gratitude, but appreciates benefits and is grateful for them, how much more should men do so. When Martin had given the bird up to the young Baron Adolphus, his countenance wore a right doleful expression. But his mother said to Adolphus, "Dear Adolphus, you see the poor robin was the lad's whole joy, he sold it, as you know, sorely against his inclination, to afford pleasure to his grandfather. You allowed it to escape through your forgetfulness, but he had so attached it to himself, that it returned of its own accord. He has been so honest as to bring it back, though he loved it dearly and might so easily have kept it. Now would it be well to take the bird from him again?"

"Oh no," exclaimed Adolphus, "it would be very ill done! There, good Martin, take your robin again; I make you a present of it, as a reward for your honesty." Martin was unwilling to accept of the robin, for which the young baron had paid so dear; but Adolphus insisted. "Take it, take it," said he, "and the next robin you catch, you can bring it to me." Martin was delighted. "If you had given me the whole castle," said he, "you could not have done me a greater favour." But the lady, who was even more pleased with the good disposition which her son showed, than Martin with his robin, pulled out a drawer, and taking a bright piece of gold, gave it to Martin, saying, "Since my Adolphus knows so well how to appreciate your noble heart, and has given you the bird as a reward for your honesty, how could his mother leave it unrewarded! Take this gold; for your honour is of more value than gold."

Martin came down the castle hill at full speed, jumping for joy, and made one bound from their door into the middle of the room. "I have the robin again," said he, "this is the third time that he comes under our roof. He is really a lucky bird. See here, grandfather, what he has brought me!" He held out the gold coin to his grandfather, and said, "Is it not true, that it is a beautiful piece of

gold? You must take it, I am well satisfied to have my dear little bird back again."

"You see," said his grandfather, "that what I always tell you is true. The noble lady too, prized honour more than gold. All good men think so. So thought the good king too, whose image is on this coin, whom I once had the honour to serve. Look at his countenance! he seems as if he were going to speak; and if he could speak, he would say what old corporal Frank always says, "My lad, be always an honourable man." With this money I will get you a new uniform. This coat will be a true dress of honour for you; for it will be won by your honourable conduct. Take care during your whole life, never to wear a stitch but what is acquired by honour and honesty."

But his robin brought more than a ducat to the noble-minded little Martin. He and his grandfather were brought under the notice of the owners of the castle by this incident. Once on a fine winter's morning, the baron and his son went out to walk, and chanced to pass by Martin's house. The young baron said, "I should like to see where the robin lives!" They entered, and the Baron of Waldberg, who hitherto had known Corporal Frank only by sight, entered into conversation with him, enquired where he had served, and was highly pleased with him. Henceforth he always stopped to speak to him as he went to hunt, and often came to his house to order a pipe bowl, and saw him at work, while he talked to him for whole hours. Adolphus too, often came with him, made acquaintance with Martin, and invited him to come to the castle.

As the grandfather felt more and more the weight of years, he made it the whole wish of his heart to provide for his grandson before his death. He had formerly thought that Martin might support himself by making spoons and pipes. But other industrious fathers in the village, who were employed in field-labour in summer, in winter had nothing to do, had taken to this trade after the example of the old soldier.

There was not now so good a sale for spoons and pipes, as they had become more common. The grandfather therefore often thought of getting his grandson taught some other trade, which might require more knowledge and skill, but which would afford a man better support. But he had given so much to his son and daughter, that he had scarcely left himself enough, and his grandson Martin had so many sisters, that his parents had enough to do to maintain them. The good old man could see no way to get the necessary money.

Just at this time young Martin, who was just fourteen years old, came one day to the castle to wish all happiness to the young Baron Adolphus on his birth-day. Adolphus showed him a beautiful writing-desk, most skilfully made, which his father had given him as a birth-day present. "The most skilful artizan in town, made it," said Adolphus, "how does it please you?" Martin examined the desk with great care. "It is beautiful wood," he exclaimed; "I never saw finer! Even the wood of the shell is beautiful. This dark brown, is walnut; the red, cherry; the yellow, pear-wood; and the lovely white is of the plane tree." The Baron of Waldberg, who chanced at this moment to enter the room, wondered how Martin came to know the names of all these woods, and said, "Who taught you all this so well?" "My grandfather, Sir," answered Martin. "I have made a collection of all sorts of woods that grow in our forests and orchards. They are made into little pieces, just like the books on the desk there, and are ranged in a row just that way. They look just like books; the bark which I have left on them, looks like the backs, and the rest of the wood, which I have polished, is like the top and the leaves."

The baron thought that he could not celebrate his son's birth-day better than by a good action. He therefore said, "Now Martin! you understand the different kinds of wood very well. I know too, that you can make pipe bowls very cleverly; but such a desk as that is a far cleverer piece of workmanship. Would you like to learn this trade and be a joiner?" "Certainly," said Martin. "There is nothing I would like better; but my grandfather cannot afford the money to pay for my instruction." "Well, now then," said the baron, "as for the money, I will provide that. If your grandfather agrees, I will have you bound apprentice to the tradesman who made that desk." Martin was delighted with this offer, and his grandfather too considered it as most fortunate, or rather as an instance of God's bounteous providence, and impressed upon his grandson the duty of thanking God with his whole heart for so great a benefit.

Martin learned his business, in three years became a journeyman, travelled into foreign countries, and returned at length to the great joy of his old grandfather, as a pious, modest young man, well clad, and in the bloom of youth and health, and very skilful in his trade. The Baron of Waldberg was highly pleased with the first specimen of workmanship he sent him, and said, "Well now, my dear Martin, it has long been my wish to have a skilful joiner about this place. I will assist you to open a workshop." The old house was rebuilt. The baron supplied him with all necessary wood without any cost, and the young tradesman executed all his work with his own hand: he soon found employment, for he was as reasonable as skilful; and in the course of time, he married the virtuous, prudent, and industrious daughter of one of the burghers of the town.

His grandfather, ever an honourable revered old man, lived to see this happiness, and dwelt with his grandson in the new house, highly honoured and beloved. Martin was also able to assist considerably his parents and his sisters. One time that Martin had invited his parents, his sisters, and all the rest of his relations, to eat a Martinmas goose together, on the Patron-day of his grandfather, and that they were all happy and joyous, the grandfather said, "This is very likely the last time in my life, that I shall

see all my children collected round my table! With joy do I remember the evening, when Martin, then a little boy, for love of me sold his robin, to procure me a merry evening on St. Martin's. Under God's providence, that bird was the first cause of Martin's good fortune. God has rewarded his love for me, his honour, his industry, and his good conduct, and placed him in a position to make the evening of my life happy, and to afford great assistance to you all. Now shall I die contented, since He who taketh care of the birds of the air, hath, by means of a robin, so lovingly provided for us all."

U.

L. D. S.

THE CONQUEROR AT THE TOMB OF ST. CUTHBERT.

FOUNDED ON A NARRATIVE IN THE HISTORY OF SIMEON DUNELMENSIS.

THE Norman King and his warrior band have entered Dunholme town,
Where St. Cuthbert lay in his holy shrine, a saint of great renown,
And haughtily the monarch cries—"An Cuthbert's corse be here,
I'll see it now, or, by my sword, these monks shall quake for fear.
If't be 'tis free from taint of death, no ill shall them befal;
But if't be not—shall perish here both shrine and church and all!"
Thus William spake—his tyrant hand to slay was ever fast;
When Prior Turgot heard the news, he well-nigh breathed his last;
For well he knew the Leopard King sought not that truth be told,
But coveted within his breast the shrine of jewelled gold.
A goodly Prior Turgot was, as e'er in chapter sate,
And certes 'twas with many a tear he wept his bitter fate,
That he, St. Cuthbert's successor, should yet stand by and see
His holy shrine laid open!—spoiled!—"Oh! no—it shall not be!"
He knelt him down, and raised his hands—"In Thee I put my trust,
My God, who never canst from Thee an humble suppliant thrust!
Make great thy name, and Oh! once more fight on thy Cuthbert's side,
Exalt him still, and beat to earth the tyrant's sinful pride!"
Then thrice he prayed to Marie Queen, and thrice to Cuthbert too,
That they would save both shrine and church from the Norman's plundering crew;
And day and night around the shrine the holy monks did pray,
And sackcloth wore and ashes, till the eve of All Saints' day.
On that day's dawn o'er ancient Wear, the autumn leaves among,
Soft steals from Dunholme's lovely choir sweet psalmody and song.
And *there* are gathered Prior and monks—and oh! how brightly streams
The morning sun through the painted glass, all diapered his beams!
And swells the chant of the early prime, and the incense floats on high,
Till it loses itself in the azure vault, starred like the very sky.
But, hark! they pause—the chant hath ceased—and full of faith divine,
The saintly Prior signs the cross, and goes to the holy shrine;
And join him there a chosen few—and lo! with trembling hands
They open the shrine, and then untie the coffin's iron bands.
The cere-cloth raised, they wept aloud—for beautiful and fair
They found the saint, like one who had been sweetly sleeping there!
And on his breast lay an altar stone, wounded with crosses five,
And clothed he was in his vestments, like a bishop yet alive;
And by him lay his bishop's staff, which in its crook did hold,
'Mid rubies red and emeralds green, a lamb of purest gold.
And on his right-hand finger shone the Bishop's blessed ring
And on his left reposing lay the head of Oswald king.
Awhile they gaze, and reverent kiss his sacred hands and feet,
And then to the rest of the brethren give that kiss of peace so sweet.
"Let God be thanked," Prior Turgot cries; "now let the mass be sung;"
And forth a solemn peal of bells to the neighbourhood is rung
Now through the aisle to the altar high a group is seen to pass;
'Tis the Prior and his servitors, all vested for the Mass;
And the lofty nave and aisles are filled with crowds from far and wide—
O England, England! when again shall this be thy sweet pride,
To see thy vast cathedral piles, as they were wont of yore,
Each morning of the blessed week, their worshippers outpour,
And on thy joyous festivals see all thy people fed,
Like pilgrims on their way to heaven, with heaven's mysterious Bread!
But now the Mass is well-nigh o'er, when sounding from with out
Is heard the tramp of warrior steed, the noise of armed rout.
But, hark! the ponderous knocker falls upon the great church-door—
Awhile the monks grow pale with fear, and mutely heaven implore!
Their prayer is heard—and armed with faith, the banners they unfurl,
The serges light, and straight go forth to meet the royal churl.
Now up the nave the fierce King comes, his armour clanking loud,
And round about him march his lords, a gay but impious crowd.
"Now where may be this saintly corse, whereof ye boast so much?"
"That saintly corse, indeed Sir King, ye may nor see nor touch."
Thus spake the Prior—to whom the King, all maddening with rage—
"Beware old man! or else no shield shall prove thy hoary age—
To the shrine!" he cries to his followers—when lo! from out the sky
Dark vapours roll, and thunders peal, and red-winged lightnings fly.
And, lo! the massive piers and roof are swaying to and fro,
And darker still, and wilder still, the angry heavens do grow.
And through the monarch's heart there shoots a sharp and deadly pain,
Who, writhing, to his lords makes sign that they the gates should gain.
"To horse," he cries, "to horse, to horse!" and on they madly ride
Nor halt they, till their weary steeds pant on the fair Tees' tide.
And now the storm hath sunk in peace, and bright the sun doth shine;
And Turgot and his monks are chanting round St. Cuthbert's shrine.

Laus Deo. G.

The venerable John Berchmans, from his very childhood, whenever a quarrel arose amongst his companions, had a great facility in quelling it, and making them friends again. And the reason of this was, because he was all sweetness, and always had recourse to prayers and entreaties.

HOW A CERTAIN HERMIT, ON HIS WAY THROUGH A FOREST, FOUND A GREAT TREASURE, AND WHAT ENSUED.

A GENTLE hermit one day proceeding on his way through a vast forest, chanced to discover a large cave, nearly hidden under ground. Being greatly fatigued, he entered to repose himself a while, and observing something shine brightly in the distance, he approached, and found it was a heap of gold. At the sight of the glittering bait, he turned away, and hastening through the forest again, as fast as possible, he had the farther misfortune to fall into the hands of three fierce robbers, always on the watch to despoil unwary travellers who might pass that way. But, though inmates of the forest, they had never yet discovered the treasure from which the hermit now fled. The thieves on first perceiving him thus strangely flying, without any one in pursuit, were seized with a sort of unaccountable dread, though, at the same time, they ventured forward to ascertain the cause. On approaching to inquire, the hermit, without relaxing his pace, answered, "I flee from death, who is urging me sorely behind." The robbers, unable to perceive any one, cried out, "Show us where he is, or take us to the place instantly." The hermit therefore replied, in a hurrid voice, "Follow me, then," and proceeded towards the grotto. He there pointed out to them the fatal place, beseeching them, at the same time, to abstain from even looking at it, as they had far better do as he had done, and avoid it. But the thieves, resolving to know what strange thing it was which had alarmed him, only bade him lead the way: which, being in terror of his life, the hermit quickly did; and showing them the heap of gold, "Here," he said, "is the death which was in pursuit of me;" and the theives, suddenly seizing upon the treasure, began to rejoice exceedingly.

They afterwards permitted the good man to proceed upon his way, amusing themselves when he was gone with ridiculing his absurd conduct. The three robbers guarding the gold in their possession, began to consider in what way they should employ it. One of them observed, "Since heaven has bestowed such good fortune upon us, we ought by no means to leave the place for a moment without bearing the whole of it along with us." "No," replied another, "it appears to me we had better not do so; but let one of us take a small portion, and set out to buy wine and viands at the city, besides many other things he may think we are in want of;" and to this the other two consented.

Now the great demon, who is very ingenious and busy on these occasions to effect as much mischief as possible, directly began to deal with the one fixed upon to furnish provisions from the city. "As soon," whispered the devil to him, "as I shall have reached the city, I will eat and drink of the best of every thing, as much as I please, and then purchase what I want. Afterwards I will mix with the food I intend for my companions something which I trust will settle their account; thus becoming sole master of the whole of the treasure, which will make me one of the richest men in this part of the world:" and as he purposed to do, so he did.

He carried the poisoned food to his companions, who, on their part, while he had been away, had come to the conclusion of killing him on his return, in order that they might divide the booty between themselves, saying, "Let us fall upon him the moment he comes, and afterwards eat what he has brought, and divide the money between us in much larger shares than before." The robber who had been at the city now returned with the articles he had brought, when the other two instantly pierced his body with their lances, and despatched him with their knives. They then began to feast upon the provisions prepared for them, and upon satiating their appetite, both soon after were seized with violent pangs, and fell dead upon the ground. In this manner all three fell victims to each other's avarice and cruelty, without obtaining their ill-gotten wealth; a striking proof of the judgment of Heaven upon traitors, for, attempting to compass the death of others, they justly incurred their own. The poor hermit thus wisely fled from the gold, which remained without a single claimant.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

The prodigal (saith Jesus) craved his share,
And in far lands his wealth on harlots shed;
Next herded swine for hire, and fain had fed
(A famine raged) upon their refuse fare.

"I will arise, and seek my father; bread
How many of his menials have to spare!—
To be but thy bond servant is my prayer;
I have sinned against thee and Heaven," he said.

But him his sire discerned yet far away,
Returning, fell in tears upon his breast;
Kissed him, and bade the truant boy array
In shoes, and ring of gold, and gorgeous vest;
Bade music sound his welcome home, and slay
The fatted calf, and feast him with the best.

The elder son was in the fields, and din
Of song and dance and noisy revel heard;
And of the feasted truant one brought word;
And he was wrath and would not enter in.

And to his sire, who fruitless prayer preferred—
"I have served thee many years, and without sin;
Nor, to make merry with my friends, have been
Requited with a kid out of the herd.

"Now, for the prodigal, the cup goes round;
For him, returning from the harlot's bed,
The fatted calf is slain, and rebecks sound."
"Son, thou art always mine," the father said,
"But it behoves us feast; the lost is found;
Thy brother lives, whom we bewailed as dead."

As three monks were once making a journey, they lost their way, and on that account were obliged to pass over a corn field, in order to avoid making a long circuit round. A countryman happening to see them, shouted out to them, and told them they were false monks: upon which the oldest said to his two companions, "Let no one make any reply." Then going forwards himself to the peasant, he said to him, "My son, you have told the truth;" but the latter continuing to abuse and upbraid him, the good man repeated, "What you say is true, my son, for if we were true monks, we should not have done you this injury: now then, pardon us for the love of God, for we acknowledge we have done wrong." At these words he was struck with admiration at the great mildness of the monk, so he threw himself at their feet, kissed their habit, and went along with them himself to show them the way.

No. 7.

ENTERTAINMENTS ON ITALY AND ITALIAN MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

BETWEEN AN ITALIAN PRIEST AND AN ENGLISH FAMILY.

THE two young men sat down to supper; after which they requested Father Theodore to give them some farther account of Italy and the Italians: but they asked this for their amusement, and not, as it appeared, for any spiritual profit.

F. Theodore said: My dear friends, yesterday I gave you some account of the Italians in general, now I shall begin to speak to you of them in particular. At different times I have been in many parts of Italy and Tuscany, in the Ecclesiastical States, in the kingdom of Naples, and for two years, in the little state of Lucca. I shall begin with this last named country, which, as it appears to me, is one of the finest I have ever seen, both for the material and moral cultivations of the country and people. With regard to the material cultivation, I think that in no country of the world can there be found better. The perfection of cultivation is at the highest pitch; the population is extremely great in proportion to the land, so that there are more hands to cultivate than land to receive culture. Hence, a piece of land there is very precious. Although the land in general is not very rich, yet the industry of the people makes it so, by manuring it with the utmost care and diligence. The rents are very high; still the people of the country live very comfortably, because the land yields two or three crops every year, and the landlords are in general very reasonable; for, if any accident happens which hinders the usual produce, then the landlord either entirely remits, or diminishes the rent.

There is another thing that contributes very much to the perfection of cultivation; it is the lease of tenure. The tenure may be considered as fixed, because a piece of land is allotted to a tenant for the space of two or three generations, so that every one who receives land is sure to enjoy it for himself, his sons, and grandsons; and before the lease ends, they take care to renew it, which they can do without much difficulty. Every tenant, therefore, considers himself, not as a tenant, but a proprietor; and, consequently, exerts all his strength to ameliorate the land as much as possible, not only by plantations, but also by buildings, &c.

John.—Are these ameliorations paid for at the end of the lease?

F. Th.—Generally not; at least, there is no law that obliges the landlord to pay. But, as I said before, those landlords are so reasonable, that to send away a tenant is a thing quite unusual among them. The only danger of being sent away from the farm is when the tenant refuses to pay his rent for two or three years together; which case, as you know, is very rare. These rents are generally paid, not in money, but in goods: viz., in a part of the produce of the land—for instance, so many bushels of grain, so many barrels of wine, of oil, &c.

John.—Are these farms very large?

F. Th.—No, they are generally very small; and it would be difficult to find any containing more than ten acres. Some contain five or six acres, others more or less; but few, I think, consist of ten.

John.—How can so small a piece of land support an entire family? Perhaps these families are very small.

F. Th.—On the contrary, they are very large. But the industry of the people is so great, and the climate so favourable to cultivation, that a small portion of land is able to support a family. The land yields fruit, not only in summer, but during the entire year; and as soon as one crop is gathered, another is sown, without leaving the land a moment's intermission.

Mr. Smith.—Are there many manufactories?

F. Th.—There are some, especially of silk, which is one of the chief products of the land; but these manufactories are few, and not so complicated, or so refined, as in England. The Italians, in general, are not very skilful at manufactories. Indeed, they are not much needed, as the land is sufficiently rich to produce every necessary for the ease and comfort of its inhabitants. Hence it comes that their industry is not so refined as it is here and in the northern countries of Europe, where the land is not so fruitful, and, consequently, cannot produce whatever conduces to the ease and support of its inhabitants. There may, perhaps, be other reasons why manufactories are not more extended in Italy; for instance, because Italy is divided into so many petty governments, &c.

James.—Perhaps, also, the Italians are less industrious, because they are themselves a less cultivated people. They are not so clever as the northern people of Europe.

Mr. Smith.—I do not think so, for Italy has been always accounted a country of genius and learning. Mr. Cobbet remarks that France and Italy abound much more in men of genius than England and Germany. Tell me, are the Italians in general a well cultivated people?

F. Th.—My dear Sir, this is a very delicate question for an Italian to answer: you know that every one is inclined to favour his own country. Still, I dare say that cultivation of mind is not altogether wanted in Italy as a whole, and much less in the little state of Lucca, which we are speaking of. In order to know the cultivation of their mind, let us now speak of their moral character. I may state that the character of these people is very good. Honour and religion are the two great features of their mind, from which two sources many other good qualities arise: viz., generosity, temperance, sobriety, zeal, &c. They are extremely fond of their national and personal honour: a man without honour is reckoned good for nothing. Poverty is not a mark of shame: a poor peasant, if he be of a good character, is esteemed by every one, and may enjoy the society of all; but a man without honour is held to be unworthy of the respect or confidence of any. On account of this fondness for honour, theft and drunkenness are things almost unknown in this country; and if by misfortune a man were found drunk, he would be obliged to quit the country, not being able to bear the disgrace resulting from drunkenness. The same may be said of theft and some other crimes. With regard to theft, there is another thing very conducive to its extirpation. It is the practice which confessors have of never giving absolution to a thief until he has actually restored the stolen goods, never admitting as reasonable the excuse that they cannot restore them by reason of their poverty. "If you are poor," they say, "then work hard to find the means; and when you have found them, make restitution, and then come to me for absolution." This practice seems to be too severe, but is, in reality, very efficacious with regard to these good people, who are exceedingly religious and faithful Christians.

Mr. Smith.—They really must be very strong indeed in their faith, for if a confessor were to do the same here, I should be very much afraid that the penitents would go away, and return no more to confession.

F. Th.—I should think so of some other people, but not of these; for I dare affirm that religion and the fear of God are so deeply engraved in their hearts as not to be so easily banished from them. They may commit sin, to be sure; but, at the same time, they lose neither faith nor a salutary fear of the divine judgments. I will tell you an anecdote well calculated to confirm what I have advanced. One day one of my compan-

ions was grossly abused by a young countryman, who loaded him with the grossest calumnies in the presence of many persons. My companion remained silent, without uttering a word in his presence. The mother of the young man, who was present, went to speak with my companion, asking him whether he would pardon her son. My companion said, "I pardon him as much as it is in my power; but, at the same time, I say, that had I said against him what he has said against me, I could not go to bed this evening without making an atonement for my offences. I should prostrate myself before him, beg his pardon, and recall all the calumnious charges I had uttered against him." Then the woman took her son, and obliged him to kneel down before my companion, ask his pardon, and recall all his slanders and calumnies. You know the power of religious feelings over a mind educated in religion and the fear of God. It prevails against passion, and makes a man overcome himself in the heat of his rage and violence.

John.—You told me that these people have well-cultivated minds. Now, tell me, are there schools everywhere established to teach them literature?

F. Th.—There are such schools in the city, but not in the country.

Mr. John.—Then the country people must be very ignorant.

F. Th.—With regard to worldly literature it may be so, but not with regard to the necessary knowledge of forming useful members of society, and good Christians; for every child is sent by his parents to the parish priest in order to learn how to read and write, and to be instructed in his religion, especially in the performance of the divine worship. For, mind well, there every man is a singer in the church; every man, from the age of seven years till his death, sings at mass, vespers, and at all the ecclesiastical offices in the church.

Mr. James.—Imagine, then, how many blunders they make in this.

F. Th.—I ask pardon. They make no blunder at all, except one in the Pange Lingua: instead of saying, Procedenti ab utroque, they say, Procedentis ab utroque. This blunder is made by all the countrymen, and they cannot be corrected, because they say, we have always sung so. In everything else they are remarkably exact.

Mr. Smith.—How can the parish priest teach all the children of his parish so well? Does he neglect all the other duties of his office?

F. Th.—No, he does not; and he can comply very well with all his duties, and teach at the same time: for almost every parish priest has a curate, and, moreover, the country parishes are generally small; sometimes they do not contain a hundred souls. They are so close to each other, that one parish church is scarcely a mile from another; and scarcely any one is obliged to walk more than half a mile to go to church. The people also are so well trained, that they can do a good deal themselves with regard to the teaching of their children. A mother has, in general, nothing else to attend to, but to take care of her children. They are very assiduous in teaching them the Christian doctrine. But about their religion we shall speak more fully by and by.

(To be continued.)

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

The devotion of the ages of faith to the blessed Virgin, recommends itself to the understanding and to the heart of all Christians, on account of her high privilege through regard to the love which Christ our Lord must have borne for her—and none of his affections we need be ashamed to cultivate—on account of her own extraordinary virtues, through tenderness for her sorrows, and, finally, from a consideration of the benefit which must result to ourselves in consequence of its cultivation. Of the first motive we have already spoken in brief; and words need not be multiplied to enforce a truth which is obvious to the intelligence, and clear as any conclusion of the severest dialectician. Let us proceed to examine the other inducements, which are drawn conjointly from the understanding and the heart. It is of faith that Christ was perfect man; consequently, independent even of faith, as supremely virtuous, he must have possessed, in an eminent degree, the sweetest and best of all human affections, maternal love. O who can estimate the love of a son for his mother! How constant is nature in all ages! But lately we read of a young man miserably slain, who spoke no other words at his death but these: "Ah! what will my poor mother say?" One of the most affecting pages of history furnishes an instance precisely similar. The young Conradin on the scaffold uttered only this cry, "O my mother! what grief will the news of me cause to you!" That mother, the empress Marguerite, was hastening from the centre of Germany to redeem his life. Arrived too late, she consecrated the price to found the monastery del Carmine, in which she is represented with a purse in her hand. Can any one conceive it possible that the humane, the affectionate, the tender Jesus, who had wept for Lazarus, and prayed for his murderers, should have felt no emotions of this kind for blessed Mary, his virgin mother, who reclined beneath his cross, her bosom pierced with a sword? Can we then imitate Jesus, and regard with the eye of a mathematician, the severity of a stoic, or the scorn of a cynic, that desolate mother, to whom he was so long subject? Again, independent of her amazing privileges, and without any reference to the example of her divine Son, is not devotion due to her from a consideration of her virtues—virtues the most eminent gift of highest God, and such as one might suppose it was impossible for the frail vessel of humanity to receive or retain in a similar degree?

"——————Whatsoe'er may be
Of excellence in creature, pity mild,
Relenting mercy, large munificence,
Are all combin'd in her."*

Mores Catholici, vol. v.

In proportion as the Christian faith was propagated, the devotion to Mary was extended over the earth. After the peace of the Church was established by the Christian emperors, the respect and homage paid to Mary became more solemn and universal, in proportion as the faithful were enabled to celebrate the holy mysteries with greater magnificence and pomp. In vain did a few restless and haughty spirits pretend to dispute her title of Mother of God. Their blasphemies contributed only to rouse the piety of the faithful: in every place altars and temples were consecrated under her protection and name, to the glory of her Son—councils were assembled, in order to defend her honour and dignity against the attacks of these innovators; and by their solemn decisions to proclaim to succeeding generations the respect and veneration which they and their forefathers entertained for this purest of all creatures. Thus, the only effect produced by the temporary propagation of this erroneous opinion, (and it is the common fate of all opinions that are erroneous,) was the establishment of the truth in its fullest lustre. Whole cities, and even empires, ever placed themselves under her powerful protection; separate communities of each sex were formed in her name, and under her patronage were illustrious for their piety and fidelity to the great Author of their existence. This kingdom, before it was separated from the centre of unity, and delivered up to the horrors of religious animosity and dissension, was distinguished for its respect and veneration for this illustrious Virgin. Our kings considered her, under her Son, as the protectress of their states; our most holy prelates were the most zealous promoters of her glory, and most earnestly encouraged the faithful to solicit her intercession and assistance before the throne of grace. This they did; and this they were authorized to do by the examples of those apostolic men, who were commissioned and sent by the holy Pope Gregory, to establish in this island the faith of Jesus on the ruins of superstition and idolatry.—*Sermons by the Rev. Edward Peach, vol. iii.*

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* Dante, Parad. xxxiii.

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